

SUBJECT: Small business use of university teleconferencing facilities

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Rangel, Solis, Cuellar, Dunnam, Kamel

0 nays

3 absent — Bailey, Rabuck, E. Reyna

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 2 — voice vote

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND : District export councils are regional groupings of private and public sector experts in international trade appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. They work to increase the international competitiveness of businesses by providing links between the export development community, educators, governmental officials, and the business community. The DEC's work closely with small business development centers located at certain public universities.

DIGEST: SB 811 would require state institutions of higher education that included or were affiliated with a small business development center to make teleconferencing facilities available to the center at reasonable times when they were not being used for other purposes. A center would use such facilities to assist small businesses in Texas expand trade links outside the state.

Upon request of a Texas-based DEC, an institution of higher education that had teleconferencing facilities would have to consult with it regarding the possibility of also allowing the council access to the facilities.

The small business development center or DEC's would have to pay the institution for the use of the facilities, but could not be charged a higher rate than other entities nor less than the average rate charged in the market area.

SB 811
House Research Organization
page 2

SB 211 would take effect September 1, 1997, and expire September 1, 2002.